
Allaah's addressing the people

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Taken from the works of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With regards to the use of the singular at times and the plural at other times in Allaah's addressing the people in the Qur'aan, Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ)¹ states:

And the address in the aayah is to the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) but He said:

Wa qadaa rabbuka allaa ta'budoo illaa iyyaahu...

And your (in the singular form) Lord has decreed that you (in the plural form) worship none except Him alone...

[Soorah al Israa (the 17th chapter) aayah 23]

And He did not say, that you (singular) worship none.

And the like of this in the Qur'aan is His statement, He the Most High:

O Prophet, when you (in the plural form) divorce the women...

[Soorah at Talaah (the 65th chapter) aayah 1]

Therefore the first address is to the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم)² and the second is general (to the people). So what is the benefit behind this changing of the manner (of addressing)?

- 1) To draw attention, because getting the attention of the person being addressed is something desired by the one speaking. And this occurs here by changing the manner (of addressing).
- 2) That the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was the leader of his nation. And the address directed to him was directed to all of his nation.

¹ (رَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ) (rahimahullaah) May Allaah the Most High have mercy on him

² (صلى الله عليه وسلم) (sallallaahu 'alayhi wa sallam) May the peace and blessings of Allaah the Most High be upon him

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3) An indication that whatever the Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is addressed with, then it is for him and for his nation – except for something where there is a proof that it is specifically for him.

4) And in this aayah in particular, there is a sign that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) was one who was under the control of the Lord, and not (himself) a Lord and Nurturer - a servant, and not one who is to be worshipped. So he comes under His statement:

...that you (in the plural form) worship..

And sufficient for him in nobility is that he be a servant of Allaah, the Mighty and Majestic.

(Al qawl ul mufeed (1/32 to 33) of Shaykh Muhammad ibn Saalih al 'Uthaymeen (رَحِمَهُ اللهُ))